

III. Program Tools

This section provides coaches with program suggestions and useful implementation tools. The materials are generic for any health theme and can be duplicated as handouts.

Roles and Responsibilities of Coaches

This handout reviews the unique role of the program coach and helps you plan your work approach.

Tips for Coaches

This document gives tips for coaches on their role and how to work with the program participants.

Suggested Activities

This is a list of activities for each monthly health theme from the *Pick Your Path to Health* campaign that coaches may want to use or adapt to fit their program.

Goal Sheets

These worksheets are created to reflect the 12 monthly health themes that coaches can duplicate for women to use to help them develop their personal health goals. Two additional sheets specifically for women who live in rural areas and women with disabilities are also included to reflect the particular needs of these populations. If needed, Coaches can decide to include these or not depending on the make-up of the women in their specific programs.

Sample Articles

This section showcases samples of the *Pick Your Path to Health* articles by population. If interested, women can fill out the request form to receive them on a monthly basis directly from the *PYPH* campaign. You can also incorporate them into a community or program newsletter.

Certificate of Completion

Upon successful completion of the program, participants will receive a colorful certificate that will be signed by both the Coach and Program Administrator. A sample is included in the back pocket of the notebook. This certificate can be completed and awarded at the program site either by using a typewriter to enter the personal information directly on the certificate. **Coaches will order the amount of certificates needed once participants are enrolled using the *Coaches Kit: Materials Order Form*.** An electronic template is currently under development to enable programs to print directly onto the certificates using their computer. More information and directions will be sent once this template has been finalized. (A sample copy of the certificate is in the back of this Resource Guide)

Monthly Article Email Request Form and Coaches Kit: Materials Order Form

This is the order form for women or programs interested in receiving the *Pick Your Path to Health* monthly articles by email. Also in this section is the *Coaches Kit: Materials Order Form* that Coaches use to order materials such as pocket planners, posters, postcards, and listserv cards as needed. The materials are of high-quality design in full color and offer health messages women can incorporate into their daily lives.

III. Program Tools

Other items you will receive as program tools that will be sent under separate cover:

The *Pick Your Path to Health* campaign offers an array of high-quality materials to support your program. Each program coach has the opportunity to order these materials. Keep in mind that you will need materials not only during the implementation phase but also throughout the contract period. As a starting point, familiarize yourself with each tool and think of ways to make the most of each item. All materials have been created to assist women achieve their goals for better health which means that each one of them can be easily incorporated into your activities.

- **2003 Pocket Planners:** 12-month planners that offer suggested weekly action steps based on the monthly *Pick Your Path to Health* campaign themes. Each planner includes a comprehensive list of health resources in the back section. (Six populations featured). (Sample of one enclosed in back pocket of this Resource Guide).
- **Promotional Gifts:** Fun and useful promotional items for participants—sports bottle; tote bag; and sun visor.
- **2003 Women's Health for the Homefront Daybook:** This daybook contains a wealth of up-to-date information on good health practices and is a must have on resources for participants. Included in the daybook are sections on: "Know When to See Your Health Care Provider," "Symptoms of Serious Health Conditions," "Preventive Screening Tests," "How to Get a Second Opinion," and much more.
- **Leading Women on the Path to Good Health/PYPH Letterhead:** The program will receive color letterhead that can be used when sending out personalized letters to participants and partners. A sample of one is enclosed in the back pocket of this Resource Guide. Programs can order more letterhead as needed or photocopy it as well in either color or black and white.
- **Listserv Cards:** Sign-up cards for participants who would like to receive weekly health tips via email from the *Pick Your Path to Health* campaign. (Sample enclosed in back pocket of this Resource Guide).
- **Postcards:** Coaches can give or mail to participants as reminders, and encouragement pieces to keep them on their goals or congratulate them on a job well done. (Sample enclosed in back pocket of this Resource Guide).
- **Posters:** High-quality, full color *Pick Your Path to Health* posters that can be displayed in your program, or other community organization that supports your program or promotes health issues. (Sample enclosed in back pocket of this Resource Guide).

Roles and Responsibilities of Coaches

As a *Pick Your Path to Health* (PYPTH) coach and mentor, you play a unique and pivotal role in leading women on the path to good health. You will engage, motivate, educate and empower women to make simple steps to improve their health in a variety of areas.

Consider the characteristics of a coach versus a mentor that you will blend in your position.

	Coach	Mentor
Focus	Performance	Individual
Role	Specific agenda	Facilitator without agenda
Relationship	Comes with the job	Self-selecting
Source of influence	Position	Perceived value
Personal returns	Teamwork/performance	Affirmation/learning
Arena	Task related	Life

Your role as a coach and mentor will involve focusing on the women and their individual needs in the program, and supporting their long-range health goals. You will also assist them with developing concrete, obtainable goals and help them monitor their progress.

In summary, a mentor has a personal interest in a participant – a “friend” who cares about them and their long-term development. A coach develops specific skills and strategies to achieve the goals, overcome challenges and produce the expected outcomes of the program’s participants.

For your consideration, here are select descriptions of what a successful coach and mentor do. You undoubtedly can think of more or add to this list, but this is to get you started on thinking about your role and how you want to establish a relationship with the women you will coach.

- ◆ Assist with developing and setting attainable goals
- ◆ Empowers others
- ◆ Challenges women to do their best
- ◆ Allows women to make their own decisions
- ◆ Maintains a results orientation approach
- ◆ Keeps women focused on the goals ahead
- ◆ Supports women in working out problems for themselves
- ◆ Offers emotional encouragement and instills confidence
- ◆ Guides and teaches the learning of skills and strategies
- ◆ Offers constructive feedback
- ◆ Communicates in a variety of styles

Tips for Coaches

As a *Pick Your Path to Health* (PYPTH) coach, you play a pivotal role in leading women on the path to good health. You will engage, motivate, educate and empower women to make simple steps to improve their health in a variety of areas. Here are some tips to help you succeed.

Establish rapport. Make sure that participants are comfortable in your environment. Tell them about you and show a genuine sense of curiosity and interest in their situation.

Focus on the person's goals, not yours. Try to help the participant move toward establishing her own meaningful goals and she will be more likely to achieve them.

Clarify roles. You are the listener, helper, and motivator. Your role is to help identify strengths and help participants create a plan to reach their own personal goals.

Make sure the person is fully engaged. Participants who feel awake, interested, like part of your team, and are actively participating in interactions are more likely to succeed.

Make suggestions based on each individual's strengths . Every PYPTH participant has unique strengths to help her achieve her goals. Help her see those strengths and you will inspire her to reach her potential.

Focus on what works. You can prevent lapses from becoming collapses by focusing on what is going right and looking for lessons learned. Don't simply urge more willpower.

Listen well. Don't ignore obstacles and unmet needs. Listen actively to the participant's concerns and appreciate their ambivalence. Try to summarize what they say to you, and ask good questions.

Call 1-800-994-WOMAN. The National Women's Health Information Center can provide you with free information and resources for your participants. To learn more go to www.4woman.gov/pypth and click on community programs.

Suggested Activities

The following are suggestions or ideas that you may want to incorporate into your program design for each of the 12 monthly health themes. These are just a few suggested activities and by all means do not exhaust all the possibilities at your disposal.

January – Spirituality: Find the strength within.

- Ask the women to come up with a creative or unique way to show how they find the strength within and share it with their group members.
- Ask chaplains at local hospitals, universities, and military bases to participate in a free seminar on "Women's Health and Spirituality".
- Hire a yoga instructor for an introductory session.
- Plan programs on meditation or other activities that reduce stress.
- Have the women keep a journal in which they take some time each day or each week to reflect and write down what they've done to embrace their spirituality.

February – Weight Management: Vital for long-term wellness.

- Sponsor a lunchtime potluck where each member brings a healthy dish or item to share.
- Start a listserv and e-mail weekly menus and words of encouragement to participants .
- Have a nutrition expert give a workshop on food: serving sizes, low-fat alternatives to different foods, options for eating out, how to cook foods in different ways, how to choose fresh, ripe food. Plan a field trip to a local farmer's market to discover fresh foods never considered.
- Take a field trip to the grocery store to shop or give guidance on healthy, low cost shopping, giving particular emphasis on what to buy or not buy for particular health conditions (diabetes, high blood pressure, and so on.)

March – Physical Activity: Stay Active. Live Longer.

- Offer a "healthy heart" aerobics or stretch class to women through a local gym.
- Start a "women's walkers club" .
- Sponsor a women's community sports team .
- Invite a fitness expert to speak about the importance of: hydration, injury prevention, strength training for women, and alternatives and suggestions for using common household items for free weights.

April – Alcohol Use: Know your limits.

- Invite a speaker from a service/support organization to speak on: affects of alcohol on the body, signs of alcoholism, where to get family support, resources in the community.
- Incorporate techniques on stress reduction as part of activity.
- Have a contest for the most creative non-alcoholic drink. Have a group where everyone would make theirs and have the group judge which is the best for a prize.

May – Mental Health: Lower your stress.

- Establish a support group for women that focuses on stress.
- Conduct depression screenings for a group of women and give continued support.
- Provide literature on mental health topics.
- Have students of massage or other professional give instruction on how to give massages; have women get a seated massage.

Suggested Activities

June – Responsible Sexual Behavior: Think before you act.

- Provide information on contraceptives and safe sex.
- Have a nurse practitioner or other health professional speak on what to expect at a gynecological exam and walk participants through the process of a mammogram and pap smear and what each exam means, the results, etc.
- Have an expert talk about STDs and HIV – prevention and the signs.
- Have the group create a community campaign aimed at teens and young adults on the benefits of safe sex.

July – Drug Abuse: Use and you lose.

- Invite a drug abuse support organization speaker to talk with group on services and supports in the community, signs of drug addiction and what to do if you live with someone who has a drug problem.
- Have a medical expert talk about the proper use and dangers of prescription drugs and what to ask your doctor about your prescriptions.
- Identify what family supports are available.

August – Health Care Access: Your health matters.

- Hold or connect group members with a women's health fair.
- Invite insurance companies to sponsor a general "benefits workshop" on what to look for in a health plan, what kind of coverage is right for your family, etc.
- Have a physician speak on how to find the right primary care physician – questions to ask. Make sure the physician is of the same cultural background as the women, if possible.

September – Prevention: It's better than cure.

- Partner with a women's clinic to offer free or low-cost immunizations.
- Hold an informational workshop on adult immunizations.
- Hold a immunization recordkeeping group: everyone create an immunization folder/chart that identifies all their immunizations and identifies ones they currently need.
- Identify community health screenings – diabetes screening, cholesterol, and so on.

October – Violence Prevention: Empower yourself.

- Encourage volunteer participation at local women's shelter.
- Sponsor an "open house" at your organization with representatives from local women's shelters and help publicize their services.
- Have each participant write up their emergency plan to leave a violent situation.
- Have women identify or begin to set up a support system for themselves.

November – Tobacco Use: Smoking—costly to your LIFE and your wallet.

- Start a smokers support group to give support to members who want to quit.
- Hold an educational seminar on second hand smoke.
- Have group keep track of number of cigarettes smoked in a week and tally up cost; then come up with ways they could spend the money saved on not smoking and go for it.

December – Family: Get support from those who care.

- Offer story-telling sessions where older members of the family share stories with community members and ask the local cable access television station to film it.
- Organize a family picnic day in your group of women.
- Have group create a family tree and look into their family history to share with their children.

Goal Sheets

Spirituality: Find the strength within

My goals for spirituality are:

✓ Take a moment to celebrate my spirit

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✓ Believe in myself—write at least of five things I do best

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✓ Measure success by how much health, peace, and joy I have

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✓ Make a list of victories I can celebrate in my life

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Goal Sheets

Weight Management: Vital for long-term wellness

My goals for weight management are:

✓ Carry a water bottle with me and will refill at least three times

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✓ Use the *Pick Your Path to Health* pocket planner to keep track of the fruits and vegetables I eat daily

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✓ Use home grown seasonings and herbs to spice up my food

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✓ Try baking, boiling, or steaming my food instead of frying it

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✓ Exercise to burn some of the calories I take in

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Goal Sheets

Physical Activity: Stay active. Live longer

My goals for physical activity are:

✓ Go for a walk with a friend everyday

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✓ Put on some music and dance

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✓ Keep my walking shoes handy

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✓ Start to exercise gradually and work my way up

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Goal Sheets

Alcohol Use: Know my limits

My goals for being aware of my alcohol use are:

✓ Stop at two drinks to avoid behavior I may regret

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✓ Take steps not to get pregnant if I've abused drugs or alcohol in the past year

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✓ Take a girlfriend's keys and don't let a friend drive drunk

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✓ Seek counseling if I or a member of my household has problems with alcohol

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✓ Throw alcohol-free parties

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Goal Sheets

Mental Health: Lower my stress. Improve my health

My goals for improving mental health are:

✓ Protect my last good nerve. Try deep breathing, massage, meditation, prayer, and exercise

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✓ Don't sweat the small stuff: choose the really necessary things that need to get done today

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✓ Get together with my girlfriends at least once a month to laugh, cry, and support one another

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✓ Won't be afraid to seek counseling

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Goal Sheets

Responsible Sexual Behavior: Think before I act

My goals for responsible sexual behavior are:

✓ Don't be afraid to say "no!" It's my body and my life

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✓ Abstain from sex or practice safe sex every time

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✓ Get tested for HIV/AIDS

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✓ Get tested for STDs regularly even if I have no symptoms

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✓ Ask my partner about his sexual history

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Goal Sheets

Drug Abuse: Use and I lose

My goals for preventing drug abuse are:

✓ Don't experiment and learn more about drug addiction

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✓ Don't take medications prescribed to others

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✓ Seek help if I am in a relationship with a drug abuser, and get help for both of us

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✓ Give addicts the support they need to quit

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Goal Sheets

Health Care Access: My health matters

My goals for improving health care access are:

✓ Schedule routine check-ups for myself and my family

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✓ Make a list of questions or concerns to discuss with your doctor

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✓ Speak up if I don't understand my doctor's instructions

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✓ Learn more about government-sponsored low-cost or free health insurance programs

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Goal Sheets

Prevention: It's better than a cure

My goals for prevention are:

✓ Have my blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol checked

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✓ Ask my local pharmacist where to get a flu shot

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✓ Schedule a pap test and pelvic exam

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✓ To help prevent osteoporosis, eat a well-balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D, exercise regularly, and don't smoke

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Goal Sheets

Violence Prevention: Empower myself

My goals for violence prevention are:

✓ Make a list of safe places where I can go to protect myself from abuse

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✓ Empower myself! Sign up for a self-defense class

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✓ Always stay in touch with friends and family

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✓ Won't keep abuse a secret and will seek help

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Goal Sheets

Tobacco Use: Smoking—costly to my life and my wallet

My goals for avoiding or quitting smoking are:

✓ Make a list of 10 things to do with my money instead of smoking

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✓ Create a no-smoking rule in my home

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✓ Find a support program in my community to help me stop smoking

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✓ Make a pact with myself to never start smoking or to stop smoking

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Goal Sheets

Family: Get support from those who care

My goals for family are:

✓ Have fun with my family this week

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✓ Ask family members for help if family responsibilities are causing me stress

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✓ Plan a funny-family-story night and invites aunts, uncles, and grandparents

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✓ Plan a family picnic

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✓ Make bed time a set time for kids each night

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Goal Sheets

Heat Stress Prevention: Keep it cool

My goals for heat stress prevention are:

✓ Drink at least 8 ounces of water every 20 minutes while working in the heat.

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✓ Keep myself well-ventilated and shielded from heat sources.

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✓ Protect my skin and eyes from the sun's damaging rays.

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✓ Monitor my medications for skin sensitivities to sun exposure.

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✓ Learn first aid techniques for heat stress.

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Goal Sheets

Additional Goals for Women with Disabilities

My goals for better health are:

✓ Eat 5-6 small, well-balanced meals a day—make every calorie count by choosing nutrition foods.

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✓ Don't self-medicate when I'm in pain. Talk to a pain specialist who has an awareness of issues that persons with disabilities may face.

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✓ To celebrate my abilities—not to define myself by my disability.

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✓ Call the ADA information line at 800-514-0301 (voice) on accessible health care and other services.

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SAMPLE MONTHLY ARTICLE – Asian and Pacific Islander Women

Pathways to Better Health: A Feature of the Pick Your Path to Health Campaign Diabetes in Asians

Did you know that diabetes is the fifth leading cause of death for Asian and Pacific Islander Americans aged 45 to 64?

Did you know that being overweight, having high blood pressure, or being physically inactive can increase your risk for developing diabetes?

When it comes to diabetes, what you know can help save your life.

Diabetes affects more than 16 million people in the United State and it is the main cause of kidney failure, amputations of the foot and leg, adult blindness, and a major cause of heart disease and stroke. Death due to diabetes is about three times higher for Asian and Pacific Islander Americans than whites.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes happens when there is too much sugar in your blood. Normally, when we eat, food is converted to sugar, which enters the bloodstream to help fuel the body's cells. With diabetes, the sugar is not used properly and it builds up in the blood. In time, this sugar buildup can damage the heart, kidneys, eyes, nerves, and blood vessels.

Type 2 diabetes makes up about 95 percent of all diabetes cases. It is more common in adults over age 40 and is strongly associated with obesity, physical inactivity, family history of diabetes, and racial or ethnic background.

What you don't know can hurt you

Many people have diabetes and don't know it. In a University of Washington study, 23 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans were found to have diabetes and not know it. The study found that 17 percent Chinese, 23 percent Japanese, 25 percent Filipino, and 28 percent Korean Americans did not know they had diabetes.

According to the National Diabetes Education program, the chances of Asian Americans developing diabetes have increased as their food choices have changed. Instead of their traditional plant- and fish-based diets, they are choosing foods with more animal proteins and fats, and more processed carbohydrates. In addition, they have become less physically active.

Diabetes may seem like a silent disease, but there are some signs to look for such as: unusual thirst, urinating often, feeling very tired or ill, losing weight without trying, having sores that are slow to heal, and having blurry eyesight.

SAMPLE MONTHLY ARTICLE –

Asian and Pacific Islander Women

A history of high blood pressure, heart attack, and family history of diabetes are early indicators, says Dr. Wilfred Fujimoto, a leading diabetes researcher at the University of Washington. “Asians are at a greater risk if a parent, brother, or sister has a history of diabetes, more so, if both parents have it. It’s important to tell your family members if you have the disease so that they can take steps to prevent it.”

How to prevent diabetes

You can reduce your risk for diabetes. A recent study by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) found that lifestyle changes can reduce the risk of getting diabetes in both men and women. Participants in the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) study reduced their risk of getting type 2 diabetes by 58 percent simply by doing physical activity 30 minutes each day and by adopting a low-fat diet.

You can choose simple physical activity that fits into your daily routine. For example, most participants in the DPP study chose walking as their exercise of choice and lost 7 percent—or 15 pounds—of their body weight. You can also follow the Asian traditional diet, which is low in saturated fat and high in complex carbohydrates.

Getting to know your BMI can also help. People with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater are at five times higher risk of diabetes than people with a BMI of 25 or less.

To calculate your BMI, visit the NIH Web site at www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/ or do it with a calculator. Multiply your weight by 703 and then divide your answer by your height in inches multiplied by your height in inches. “A BMI of 25 or more is considered overweight,” says Dr. Fujimoto. “For Asians, a normal BMI should be about 23, because the risk of disease increases at a BMI of 23.”

The lifestyle changes recommended to avoid diabetes are simple and doable. Start today. Prevent diabetes before it happens to you. It will help keep you on a path to better health.

- Talk to your doctor about your risk for diabetes.
- To learn more about how to prevent diabetes, visit the National Diabetes Education Program at <http://ndep.nih.gov> or call toll-free 1-800-860-8747.
- The University of Washington offers complimentary labels to paste on your medical chart to advise your health care provider that you are from an ethnic group with high risk for diabetes and that you should have your blood sugar tested annually. You can order a label for yourself and each of your family members by calling (206) 543-5597 or e-mail your request to jacds@u.washington.edu.

Pick Your Path to Health is a national public health campaign sponsored by the Office on Women’s Health within the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. For more information about the campaign or to subscribe to the listserv to receive tips on improving your health, call 1-800-994-WOMAN or TDD at 1-888-220-5446, or visit the National Women’s Health Information Center at www.4woman.gov.

SAMPLE MONTHLY ARTICLE – American Indian and Alaskan Native Women

Pathways to Better Health: A Feature of the Pick Your Path to Health Campaign Access to Good Health Care, Breaking Through the Isolation

By Cathy McCarthy
Anishinaabe - Metis (Non-status)

Many years ago, I visited my uncle in a TB sanitarium where he underwent long term treatment. He caught TB working with a bush pilot bringing very sick Inuit and Cree people from their northern communities to hospitals in the south. He told me that his heart was broken seeing these people airlifted. “The people don’t die of their disease,” he said. “They die from isolation; from being cut off from everything they hold dear.” This is one of those thoughts that I have carried around ever since.

Access to health care for Indian people is still a major problem. And the problem is still much more than having a clinic or a doctor’s office nearby. It is in the spirit of all the people who have passed on, alone, afraid, and cut off from everything they held dear that I offer this discussion.

At the bottom of any talk about health care is the question of enough money to do it right. Money determines how far you must travel to a clinic that will accept you and what kind of services will be available once you get there. For most of us today, the only place to get health care is a tribal clinic, a public clinic, or a facility run by the Indian Health Service (IHS). This is because only one third of our population has private health care insurance that would allow us to go anywhere else. So you might say that makes us a captive audience in a situation dependent on enough money to work well.

According to Pamela Kingfisher, a Native health care researcher, Congress has given only 25 percent of the level of money authorized in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act of 1976. This Act was drawn up to provide proper health care and education for Indian people. In any given year, the government spends around half the health care money on Indian people that it does on other Americans. Because of funding shortages and challenges, we need to think about making the most of the services offered by the existing clinics where we live. Here are some ideas on how to do that.

Once an Indian woman is inside a clinic that accepts her, many times she is seen and treated by someone who practices only the western form of medicine. There is nothing wrong with this. In many, maybe even most cases, it gets the job done and we are satisfied. But, for many of us, there is a vast difference between the notion of treatment and the concept of healing.

Pamela Kingfisher points out that, as Indian women, “We have been and are the keepers of our culture and the traditional healing knowledge of the Grandmothers.” Those healing ways have always been based on rekindling the balance of spirit, body, emotions, and intellect. We know that treatment without healing is only temporary and may touch only one or two of these four elements.

In many communities, there is a strong movement to bring back the old ways for healing the four elements of life and combining them with the best of western medicine forms of treatment. Pamela Kingfisher speaks of several projects throughout the United States that have had great

SAMPLE MONTHLY ARTICLE –

American Indian and Alaskan Native Women

success in doing this already. These projects have shown that when you bring in traditional healing, you can improve the people's general health and balance by spending less money on expensive western medicine. You might say, this is a powerful message. It might even be one of the ways to fight the isolation that broke my uncle's heart. And, with all the talk of runaway spending in health care in the United States, maybe the rest of America could learn something important from these projects.

With these successes in mind, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently announced that they are giving American Indian and Alaskan Native tribes the right to operate, control, and redesign most IHS programs and activities if they want to do so.

While this new approach is tested, there is much we can do in our individual communities above and beyond national policies. For the rest of us, it might be more helpful to separate the big picture of providing effective and sensitive health care for all Indian people from what we can do in our individual communities.

Pamela Kingfisher says it well when she states, "Indigenous women are the mothers of their nations and that means all issues affect us. We need to maintain jurisdiction over family, nutrition, and health, but go beyond as advocates for the survival of our people and future generations."

We have an important role to play in building a good health care system in all our communities. First, we can raise our voices to make sure there is enough money and there is access to a clinic within a reasonable distance. Then we can recall the healing traditions of our Grandmothers and make sure they are made available alongside good western medicine. We can make a difference in the health of our families, our communities and ourselves right now by using those health services already available to us. One way to do that is to schedule an annual physical exam for you and everyone in your family where you know you will find good care.

There is much to do, and we are equal to the task.

Here are a few good sources of information to help lead you on the path to better health.

- Pamela J. Kingfisher, *The Health Status of Indigenous Women of the U.S.: American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiians*, (Beijing Conference, 2000), <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/canusa/papers/usa/english/indigen.htm>.
- Jennie Roe, Jacquetta Swift, Robert, S. Young, *The Rationing of Healthcare and Health Disparity for the American Indians/Alaska Natives*, 2002, <http://books.nap.edu/books/030908265X/html/310.html#pagetop>. You can read this document directly online.

Pick Your Path to Health is a national public health education campaign sponsored by the Office on Women's Health within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For more information about the campaign, please call 1-800-994-WOMAN or 1-888-220-5446 (TDD), or visit the National Women's Health Information Center at <http://www.4woman.gov/> To request weekly health tips by e-mail, click on the box that says, "Click Here for weekly health tips by e-mail."

SAMPLE MONTHLY ARTICLES – African American Women

Pathways to Better Health: A Feature of the Pick Your Path to Health Campaign **The Number One Predictor of Diet Failure - and How to Beat It**

The Inside Story

The single most common emotional eating trigger and the No.1 predictor of weight loss relapse is stress, according to obesity expert Dr. John P. Foreyt of Baylor College of Medicine.

Being “stressed out” is a common expression nowadays. You hear this phrase often and perhaps even utter it from time to time yourself. However, do you really know what being stressed out means?

It is commonly used in a “negative” sense, and when translated it usually means you are beyond **your** *comfort or tolerance level*—physically and/or psychologically.

Stress isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It’s a natural part of living. Life without any stress is impossible. When you’re working hard, tired, hungry, emotionally charged, or sick with the flu, your body secretes hormones in response to these stressors in order to reestablish your body’s stability. That’s the inside chemistry of stress. Your challenge is to try to maintain a comfortable amount of stress that you can manage.

Recognizing Stress

“I don’t know...I start feeling anxious. My temper gets short. I feel hopeless...I know when I’m getting stressed out”, says Kathy Dyer of Bowie, Maryland, mother of three ranging in age from five months to 13 years old, and full-time policy analyst and attorney for the Federal government. Kathy is ahead of the game by the mere fact that she realizes when she has stress and can take measures to handle the situation.

Research has shown that African American women have higher levels of adrenaline in their systems as they are stressed and this can result in high blood pressure and even premature death.

“People are not as aware of the unique stresses that African American women have. In addition to the day-to-day stressors we may all encounter, for example, not having enough money or taking care of your children, African American women also have to deal with how they are viewed in this society as Black women. And that can take a toll on you,” says Dr. JudyAnn Bigby, Medical Director, Office for Women, Family and Community Programs, at Brigham & Women’s Hospital in Boston.

The first step in managing stress is to recognize that it exists. The big stressors are easy to identify—natural disasters, illness, death, births, marriage, moving, job changes. But daily life, the low-grade, day-to-day responsibilities—and yes, even things you enjoy doing that need your constant attention—are stressors and can eventually take its toll on your health. Debra Churos of

SAMPLE MONTHLY ARTICLES –

African American Women

Alexandria, Virginia, mother of an eight-year-old daughter and part-time office worker, identified some of the following symptoms when she is stressed.

- anxiety
- short temper
- eating – anything and everything
- feeling hopeless
- crying
- irritability
- headaches
- breathing heavier, heart pounding
- more emotional/stressed around menstrual cycle

According to the American Medical Women’s Association, Debra’s symptoms are common. Whether you have these symptoms or not, you can be pretty sure that stress has some role and effect on your life and health, and it can play havoc with your weight-control efforts.

Strategies to deal with it

Stress happens. And when it does, you will react to it. The most common reaction is to eat. Actually, it’s not a bad idea to eat when feeling stressed. But what you will probably do is to eat something that makes you feel good. You know what those feel-good-foods are: ice cream, potato chips, macaroni and cheese, peach cobbler. This is especially true if you grew up using food as a stress releaser. Instead of reaching for the ice cream, Dr. Bigby recommends coming up with alternatives to release stress.

Try the following

Try healthy comfort-food alternatives: Low-fat proteins (yogurt, turkey), vegetables, and fruit. If you have a refrigerator at the office, keep some of these at the office for when you get hungry. If that’s not an option, have some fruit or cut-up raw vegetables in a plastic bag in your purse or at your desk.

Don’t sweat the small stuff: Manage your time better. Make a list of what needs to be done and prioritize them. As Debra says, “I ask myself what’s the most important thing to accomplish and what can wait.”

Find time to relax and unwind: Go to a place just for yourself (bathroom, the park, a special place in your home). Find 10-20 minutes each day to relax and to just give your mind a break.

Pray, meditate, yoga: It works for many people.

Exercise: Walk, endorphins, feel good...dance, endorphins, feel good...

Establish a support system: Join a woman’s group of any kind where you will get support and a chance to relate to others.

Reduce environmental stressors: Dislike your job? Find another one. Noisy neighbors getting on your nerves? Move. Sometimes we can’t control our environment, but when we can, it can make all the difference.

Ask for help when you need it: Ask and you shall receive.

As you pick your path to a more stress-manageable and healthy life, keep in mind, you may be as Chaka Khan and Whitney Houston profess--“Every Woman”, but, every woman still needs a break.

SAMPLE MONTHLY ARTICLES – African American Women

For more information on stress management, weight loss, and information on health-related topics contact the:

- National Women’s Health Information Center, Office of Women’s Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources, www.4woman.gov, 1-800-994-WOMAN
- National Institute of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov, 301-443-4513
- American Institute on Stress, www.stress.org, 914-963-1200
- American Medical Women’s Association, www.amwa-doc.org, 703-838-0500
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, www.cdc.gov, 1-888-232-4674.

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SAMPLE MONTHLY ARTICLE - Latinas

Pathways to Better Health: A Feature of the Pick Your Path to Health Campaign **Celebrate Your Spirituality**

It's a New Year, and you've already started making promises to yourself. You know, the ones about the new exercise plan, healthy eating, spending more time with the family, and so on.

But if you're not careful, your promises will fall victim to your busy schedule faster than you can say, "I am a priority!"

Are you really a priority? Or, do your needs come at the end of a long to do list: parenting, work, housework, etc.?

Most Latinas take care of everybody in the family before doing something for themselves. For women, who are some of the busiest people on earth, finding and celebrating your spirituality within everyday activities may be the single most generous thing you do for yourself this year.

What Is Spirituality?

Spirituality has many definitions, some of which are:

- A belief in something greater than oneself
- A sense of connection with all living things
- An awareness of the meaning of life
- The development of values

Spirituality is also closely associated with religion, but spirituality does exist outside of religion as well.

So the most important definition is *yours* to create!

"Getting together with other women is a start," says Robin Liten-Tejada of Arlington, Virginia, who participates in women's retreats and many other activities that help her find the spirituality within her.

Liten-Tejada explains that she's always been interested in spiritual things. She finds spirituality in nature in activities such as bird watching and other activities such as women's retreats.

At one retreat, she says one of the activities included drumming. When she returned home, she looked for drum circles in her neighborhood and she says that it led her to make connections with other people.

So whether you find your spiritual strength from simple, enjoyable activities such as drumming or commune with other women, creating your own spirituality is possible in

SAMPLE MONTHLY ARTICLE - Latinas

simple, easy to do steps. But you must make the time for yourself today. Liten-Tejada says she has noticed that most of the women in her retreats are in their fifties and that many women seem to wait until their children have left home to begin to do something for themselves.

You take care of everyone, but who takes care of you in your twenties, thirties, and forties?

“We possess so much power we don’t even realize we have and we don’t access,” Liten-Tejada says of women.

How Do You Go to the Grocery Store?

To begin to create your own definition of spirituality, observe how you approach ordinary events, such as grocery shopping. Is it a chore, a stressful outing left to the last minute?

If you could make the time, how would you like to approach ordinary activities? Can you associate buying food with nourishment for the body? Or, can you find and enjoy the beauty in the multitude of colors and textures of the fruits and vegetables at the market?

Look back at your own family traditions with food. Do you recall the care and love given by your mother or grandmother to every meal they prepared? What did they know that we have now forgotten?

Did your ancestors find a strong connection between the food they prepared and the earth? Look back at other activities your ancestors did—explore the spiritual value of each and borrow liberally from such a rich cultural heritage.

Whatever form your spirituality may take, the beauty of the process of creating your own spiritual connections is that you define them.

Whether it is related to food, or to finding the joy of playing in the park with your kids, or sharing a quiet evening with a loved one at home, or rejoicing with a friend, or finding joy in the fresh start of a new year, celebrating your spirituality is possible.

How to Begin

Each person approaches spirituality differently. Some prefer private prayer, while others prefer attending church services, and yet others may find spirituality in physical exercise, reading, or community service.

Begin by considering your spirituality as part of your every activity and not a chore you have to do.

Your own path may include how you react to everyday situations, how you communicate with your family and friends, and how well you take care of yourself.

SAMPLE MONTHLY ARTICLE - Latinas

“It makes me feel so strong. This is who I am inside,” says Liten-Tejada of how the activities she participates in make her feel.

Don’t wait until your fifties—start on your path to spirituality today!

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Monthly Article Request Form

***PICK YOUR PATH TO HEALTH* MONTHLY ARTICLES**

Pick Your Path to Health is a national, community-based education campaign from the Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health. It strives to encourage health awareness among all women, focusing on health issues as they relate to Latinas, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native women, women with disabilities, and women who live in rural areas. One component of this campaign is to provide practical, easy-to-implement steps to improve their health and well being through articles targeted to women with multiple demands on their time and energy. If you would like to have a copy of the monthly articles emailed directly to you, please complete the form below.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: () _____ **Email address:** _____

PYPATH Article by Population	Yes, I'd like email copies for this population (check all that apply)
African American	
Asian and Pacific Islander	
American Indian/Alaska Native	
Latinas	

Mail or fax to: Matthews Media Group, 6101 Executive Blvd., Suite 300, Rockville, MD 20852, (301) 984-7196; attn: Debra Al-Salam

Coaches Kit: REVISED - Materials Order Form

Program Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Number of program participants: _____ Date: _____

NUMBERS FOR MATERIALS ARE LIMITED. BASED ON NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN PYPH PROGRAM.

Pick Your Path to Health Materials	Quantity (No. limited)		Date Needed
Poster (18" x 36")			
Pocket Planner – African American			
Pocket Planner – Asian and Pacific Islander			
Pocket Planner – American Indian/Alaska Native			
Pocket Planner – Latinas			
Pocket Planner – Women Living in Rural Areas			
Large Planner – Women with Disabilities			
Postcards: African American Asian & Pacific Islander American Indian & Alaska Native Latinas			
Listserv Cards – available in English and Spanish	English	Spanish	
Newsletter (quarterly publication) (one subscription per organization)			
PYPH/Leading Women Letterhead	Color	B/W	
Promotional Items: Check if you would like these for your participants. Number limited to actual participants in programs. Water bottles Sun visors Tote bags			
Certificates of Completion			

Please mail or fax this form to:

Pick Your Path to Health Coordinator, 6101 Executive Boulevard, Suite 300,
Rockville, MD 20852; 301-348-1641 (phone); 301-984-7196 (Fax)